



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VISITOR SPENDING INCREASE IN JACKSONVILLE AND ONSLOW COUNTY RANKED HIGHEST IN STATE FOR 2018

Spending by Visitors to Jacksonville & Onslow County Increases by 8.04 Percent in 2018

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. – Monday, August 19, 2019 — **Governor Roy Cooper** recently announced that domestic visitors to and within *Onslow County* spent \$249 million in 2018, an 8.04% increase from 2017; the highest increase of any county in the state. This data comes from an annual study commissioned by [Visit North Carolina](http://www.visitnorthcarolina.com), a unit of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

For Onslow County residents, tourism spending represents a **savings of \$111.66 per person** in taxes they would have had to pay to equate to this income from the tourism industry.

“Since these are independently derived numbers for this ranking, it validates some of the strategic actions taken to improve tourism in our area,” said Michael Lazzara, Chairman of the Jacksonville Tourism Development Authority.

“While it is clear that Hurricane Florence continues to drive post-storm housing and now construction accommodations, the impact was only felt for the last three-and-a-half months of the calendar year,” said Lazzara. “Our indicators and those of the US Travel Association confirm the area’s efforts began showing significantly before the storm.”

Joint efforts between the **Jacksonville Tourism Development Authority** and **Onslow County Tourism**, a marketing arm of the Jacksonville-Onslow Chamber, have included inviting selected members of the media, as well as travel writers and bloggers to Onslow County. Strategic social media placements to targeted audiences, as well as the implementation of a revamped military reunion effort, are also part of both organizations’ plans to attract overnight stays.

“The 2018 results are very exciting. We value our tourism and hospitality partners and employees working in Onslow County. They play an integral role in our ongoing success,” said Donna Hammonds, Manager of Onslow County Tourism.

Everyone can help attract more tourism to our area. See Onslow County Tourism at www.onlyinonslow.com and see Jacksonville Tourism at www.visitjacksonvillenc.com. A travel guide can be ordered by calling Onslow County Tourism at 910 347-3141.

Tourism impact highlights for 2018:

- The travel and tourism industry directly employs more than **1,888 persons in Onslow County**.
- Total **payroll** generated by the tourism industry is **\$49.3 million in Onslow County**.
- **State tax revenue generated in Onslow totaled \$12.9 million** through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income. About **\$9.48 million** in local taxes were



generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses.

Governor Cooper announced in May that visitors to North Carolina set a record for spending in 2018. The \$25.3 billion in total spending represented an increase of 5.6 percent from 2017. These statistics are from the “Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2018,” which can be accessed at partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies. The study was prepared for Visit North Carolina by the U.S. Travel Association.

“The numbers confirm the strength of North Carolina’s tourism industry as an anchor of economic development,” said Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit North Carolina. “As the No. 6 state in the country for overnight visitation, we can attribute our success to the natural beauty and authenticity that visitors experience, and to a passionate effort to inform and inspire travelers. The money they spend benefits everyone by sustaining jobs and reducing our residents’ tax burden.”

Statewide highlights include:

- State tax receipts as a result of visitor spending **rose 4.7 percent to more than \$1.3 billion in 2018.**
- Visitors spend more than **\$69 million per day** in North Carolina. That spending adds \$5.64 million per day to state and local tax revenues (about \$3.5 million in state taxes and \$2.1 million in local taxes).
- The travel and tourism industry directly employs **more than 230,000 North Carolinians.**
- **Each North Carolina household saves on average \$532** in state and local taxes as a direct result of visitor spending in the state.

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CONTACTS:

Donna Hammonds, Onslow County Tourism
Phone: 910-347-3141, ext. 222
Glenn Hargett, Jacksonville Tourism Development Authority
Phone: 910-938-5220